



March 5, 2012

The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Obama:

The *USAF Force Structure Changes (Feb 2012)* and its corresponding “Adjustments” proposal moves and retires many flying assets around the country. We are deeply concerned that this plan significantly impacts our states and the nation — it results in the loss of the 136th Airlift Wing’s eight C-130s, located in Fort Worth, Texas. The 136th Airlift Wing is one of the most proven and capable airlift organizations in the USAF and is vital to state and regional hurricane and other emergency responses. Losing the C-130s takes away a powerful airlift asset for saving the lives of Gulf Coast States citizens and removes this capability from the nation’s inventory for approximately two years as new facilities are built and crews are trained in another state.

Texas and the Gulf Coast are under constant threat of hurricanes, wildfires and floods. These C-130s have answered the call to support Gulf Coast States to counter these threats at a moment’s notice. The Governor of Texas can mobilize and deploy these C-130s in a matter of hours either in Texas or at our request with a simple phone call through EMAC agreements. The same support from the federal government could take days. Since 2005 the Texas Air Guard C-130s have flown 423 storm response sorties in Texas, Louisiana and Mississippi, carrying 3,143 passengers and delivering 939 tons of much-needed emergency supplies along the Gulf Coast. Immediately after Hurricane Katrina made landfall, these C-130s were among the first into New Orleans with National Guardsmen and supplies, and taking out evacuees. Acting on the authority of an agreement between Texas and Louisiana, this unit single-handedly ran cargo operations at New Orleans Naval Air Station (first airport in operation after landfall) and helped open and run airlift operations in Gulfport, Mississippi. During hurricanes Ike and Gustav these

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aircraft evacuated 800 hospital and nursing home patients prior to landfall, a successful “first” in the United States.

Mr. President, it makes no sense to move the assets of a perfectly functioning and experienced unit that has supported us well to establish the exact same capability in a state with none of this experience or any ties to the states that traditionally require these assets for emergency response. The unnecessary cost to taxpayers in MILCON and additional training and operational requirements also seems to be a waste. We request you reconsider this move and leave the C-130s in the Texas Air National Guard so they can continue to provide outstanding support to our states and the nation.

Sincerely,



Rick Perry
Governor
State of Texas



Phil Bryant
Governor
State of Mississippi



Rick Scott
Governor
State of Florida



Bobby Jindal
Governor
State of Louisiana



Robert Bentley
Governor
State of Alabama